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Erie Man Serves FBI As Translator

A Gannon College alumnus has recently joined the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a language translator-interpreter, a relatively new field for the Justice Department agency.

Thomas McLaughlin, a 1961 Gannon graduate, in a recent visit to the Erie College, explained that the FBI is now looking for qualified college graduates with a fluency in certain languages.

McLaughlin translates and interprets material in the Bulgarian, Russian, French and Spanish languages at the FBI. During his visit, he explained that, in addition to investigative material requiring translation, the FBI also receives letters from police agencies and others abroad requesting photographs, literature and innumerable details concerning the organization.

Hence, translator applicants must be thoroughly qualified in more than one foreign language and must be able to translate successfully material both to and from the English language.

McLaughlin learned three of the languages he works with — Russian, French, and Spanish at Gannon under the direction of Dr. Paul W. Peterson, head of Gannon's Modern Languages Department.

McLaughlin made it clear that qualified language applicants for these positions with the FBI need not go to FBI Headquarters in Washington, D.C., to submit their applications but may do so through any one of its field offices which are located in 56 major cities throughout the United States and in Puerto Rico.

Following his graduation from Gannon, McLaughlin attended graduate school at the University of Pittsburgh and then worked with the Central Intelligence Agency before becoming a language translator with the FBI.

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